

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 5, next to last paragraph:

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a template upon which the fashioned tissue annuloplasty band is mounted, facilitating sizing and placement of the tissue annuloplasty band in the heart and ensuring that the tissue annuloplasty band maintains its shape during application.

Page 13, first paragraph:

More particularly, and looking now at Fig. 1, there is shown a male/female cutting die 10. Cutting die 10 comprises a male die 20 having a groove 30 formed therein, and a female die 40 having a window 50 formed therein. When a piece of donor tissue (e.g., pericardium) is placed between male die 20 and female die 40, and the two die members are thereafter brought together, a piece of graft tissue (corresponding in size to ~~opening~~ window 50 in female die 40) will be cut from the donor tissue.

Page 20, last paragraph, continuing onto page 21:

In another preferred form of the invention, and looking at Figs. 14-22, a tissue annuloplasty band 100A (Fig. 20) is formed using an external structural mesh 300 (Fig. 16). More particularly, graft tissue 310 (Fig. 14) is cut into a preferred long length 320 using a tissue grasper 330 and a tissue cutter 340, both being standard, commercially-available devices. To aid in inserting tissue length 320 into external mesh 300, a temporary guide tube ~~340~~ 342 (Fig. 15) may be used to hold open the external mesh 300 and guide the tissue length 320 through the mesh.

Page 22, last paragraph:

64 Looking at Fig. 16, guide tube ~~340~~ 342 has been inserted through external mesh 300 to provide a smooth path for tissue 320. A tissue hook 382 and shaft 384 are inserted through guide tube ~~340~~ 342, and then tissue 320 is folded in half and inserted through hook 382 (Fig. 17). For this embodiment, tissue 320 must be at least twice as long as the pre-sized band length. An alternative to hook 382 is a grasper (not shown) that pulls a single length of tissue through guide tube ~~340~~ 342. For such an alternative embodiment, a single length of tissue might be wider than a folded length of tissue, such that the volume of tissue inside the external mesh 300 is similar in both embodiments.

Page 23, first paragraph:

As Looking next at Figs. 18-20, the tissue 320 is pulled through guide tube 400 by pulling on tissue retraction handle 386. Guide tube ~~340~~ 342 is then pulled out from between tissue 320 and external mesh 300. Any excess tissue 320 is cut to the length of external mesh 300 and purse string sutures 370 are tied closed at 387 to secure the tissue 320 within external mesh 300, forming a properly sized tissue annuloplasty band 100A.